

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

### **Listing of Claims:**

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for collecting tax information by a tax information requestor comprising the steps of:

connecting electronically said tax information requestor to an electronic intermediary;  
collecting electronically at least one of an electronic tax return or tax data of a taxpayer from said electronic intermediary, wherein said electronic tax return and/or tax data is electronically provided to said electronic intermediary by a tax data provider; and

performing a check of said taxpayer by said tax information requestor using said electronic tax return or tax data collected electronically,

wherein said check is not used to compute taxes of said taxpayer, wherein said tax information requestor is not a taxing authority, and wherein said electronic intermediary stores said electronic tax return or tax data.

2. **(Previously Presented)** A method as in claim 1, wherein said tax information requestor is electronically connected to said electronic intermediary using an electronic link.

3. **(Original)** A method as in claim 2, wherein said electronic link comprises telephone communication equipment.

4. **(Original)** A method as in claim 2, wherein said electronic link comprises an electronic data network.

5. **(Currently Amended)** [[An]] A method as in claim 4, wherein said electronic data network is the Internet.

6. **(Currently Amended)** ~~[[An]]~~ A method as in claim ~~[[35]]~~ 1, wherein said tax data provider is an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority.

7. **(Original)** A method as in claim 1, wherein said tax data is a payroll statement, a bank statement, a savings and loan statement, a mortgage statement, a credit card bureau statement, a thrift institution statement, a brokerage account statement, a mutual fund statement, a charity statement, or a statement relevant for tax purposes.

8. **(Canceled)**

9. **(Canceled)**

10. **(Canceled)**

11. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus for collecting tax information by a tax information requestor comprising:

means for connecting electronically said tax information requestor to an electronic intermediary;

means for collecting electronically at least one of an electronic tax return or tax data of a taxpayer from said electronic intermediary, wherein said electronic tax return and/or tax data is electronically provided to said electronic intermediary by a tax data provider; and

means for performing a check of said taxpayer by said tax information requestor using said electronic tax return or tax data collected electronically,

wherein said check is not used to compute taxes of said taxpayer, wherein said tax information requestor is not a taxing authority, and wherein said electronic intermediary stores said electronic tax return or tax data.

12. (*Canceled*)

13. (*Currently Amended*) A computer-readable medium embodying a computer program for collecting tax information by a tax information requestor, said computer program comprising code segments for:

connecting electronically said tax information requestor to an electronic intermediary;

collecting electronically at least one of an electronic tax return or tax data of a taxpayer from said electronic intermediary, wherein said electronic tax return and/or tax data is electronically provided to said electronic intermediary by a tax data provider; and

performing a check of said taxpayer by said tax information requestor using said electronic tax return or tax data collected electronically,

wherein said check is not used to compute taxes of said taxpayer, wherein said tax information requestor is not a taxing authority, and wherein said electronic intermediary stores said electronic tax return or tax data.

14-34. (*Canceled*)

35. (*Currently Amended*) A method as in claim 1, further comprising:

connecting electronically said tax information requestor to ~~[[a]]~~ said tax data provider;

and

collecting electronically said electronic tax return and/or tax data from said tax data provider.

36. (*Currently Amended*) An apparatus as in claim 11, further comprising:

means for connecting electronically said tax information requestor to ~~[[a]]~~ said tax data provider; and

means for collecting electronically said electronic tax return and/or tax data from said tax data provider.

37. (*Currently Amended*) A computer-readable medium as in claim 13, further comprising code segments for:  
connecting electronically said tax information requestor to [[a]] said tax data provider;  
and  
collecting electronically said electronic tax return and/or tax data from said tax data provider.

38. (*New*) An apparatus as in claim 11, wherein said tax data provider is an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority.

39. (*New*) An apparatus as in claim 11, wherein said tax data is a payroll statement, a bank statement, a savings and loan statement, a mortgage statement, a credit card bureau statement, a thrift institution statement, a brokerage account statement, a mutual fund statement, a charity statement, or a statement relevant for tax purposes.

40. (*New*) A computer-readable medium as in claim 13, wherein said tax data provider is an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority.

41. (*New*) A computer-readable medium as in claim 13, wherein said tax data is a payroll statement, a bank statement, a savings and loan statement, a mortgage statement, a credit card bureau statement, a thrift institution statement, a brokerage account statement, a mutual fund statement, a charity statement, or a statement relevant for tax purposes.

42. (*New*) A method for collecting tax information by a tax information requestor comprising the steps of:

connecting electronically said tax information requestor to a tax data provider;  
collecting electronically at least one of an electronic tax return or tax data of a taxpayer from said tax data provider; and  
performing a check of said taxpayer by said tax information requestor using said electronic tax return or tax data collected electronically,  
wherein said check is not used to compute taxes of said taxpayer, wherein said tax information requestor is not a taxing authority, and wherein said tax data provider stores said electronic tax return or tax data.

43. *(New)* A method as in claim 42, wherein said tax data provider is an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority.

44. *(New)* A method as in claim 42, wherein said tax data is a payroll statement, a bank statement, a savings and loan statement, a mortgage statement, a credit card bureau statement, a thrift institution statement, a brokerage account statement, a mutual fund statement, a charity statement, or a statement relevant for tax purposes.

45. *(New)* An apparatus for collecting tax information by a tax information requestor comprising:  
means for connecting electronically said tax information requestor to a tax data provider;  
means for collecting electronically at least one of an electronic tax return or tax data of a taxpayer from said tax data provider; and  
means for performing a check of said taxpayer by said tax information requestor using said electronic tax return or tax data collected electronically,  
wherein said check is not used to compute taxes of said taxpayer, wherein said tax information requestor is not a taxing authority, and wherein said tax data provider stores said electronic tax return or tax data.

46. (*New*) An apparatus as in claim 45, wherein said tax data provider is an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority.

47. (*New*) An apparatus as in claim 45, wherein said tax data is a payroll statement, a bank statement, a savings and loan statement, a mortgage statement, a credit card bureau statement, a thrift institution statement, a brokerage account statement, a mutual fund statement, a charity statement, or a statement relevant for tax purposes.

48. (*New*) A computer-readable medium embodying a computer program for collecting tax information by a tax information requestor, said computer program comprising code segments for:

connecting electronically said tax information requestor to a tax data provider;  
collecting electronically at least one of an electronic tax return or tax data of a taxpayer from said tax data provider; and

performing a check of said taxpayer by said tax information requestor using said electronic tax return or tax data collected electronically,

wherein said check is not used to compute taxes of said taxpayer, wherein said tax information requestor is not a taxing authority, and wherein said tax data provider stores said electronic tax return or tax data.

49. (*New*) A computer-readable medium as in claim 48, wherein said tax data provider is an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority.

50. (*New*) A computer-readable medium as in claim 48, wherein said tax data is a

payroll statement, a bank statement, a savings and loan statement, a mortgage statement, a credit card bureau statement, a thrift institution statement, a brokerage account statement, a mutual fund statement, a charity statement, or a statement relevant for tax purposes.